769 they return to their homes.

796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard un-
533 til the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over.
[431] On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsiouré

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

173 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
644 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had
357

173 to be on the field of battle himself and for five years was unable
644 to vanquish his enemy who was entrenched on a mountain and
357 well supported by the local inhabitants.

After Warga had tried every means at his command to conquer his enemy, he hacked down the crops, which were almost ripe, and captured all the livestock that ventured down the mountain. In short, he devastated the country.

This succeeded so well that at last the local inhabitants, faced with famine, had to choose between the life of the chief they were sheltering and their own lives. Mamzi was therefore handed over and imprisoned at Saponé (1).

1. The principal canton town in the district of Ouagadougou.

During the five years of this difficult campaign, Naba Warga, aside from the warriors, had only a young boy to serve him since his wives were not present. The boy served as cook [160] and personal servant. In short, he performed the duties of a wife so well that Warga decided that he was worthy of some notice and decided to reward him.

When he had returned to his lands, he freed this faithful servitor after first giving him a wife. Then it occurred to him that several children in his court could perform the same services. He therefore ordered them to be recruited on a large scale, and these were the sogoné.

357 Every boy recruited to become a sogoné can expect to be given
644 a wife, however little she may be worth, when he is freed.

The sogoné have the same standing as the napagba,* and they
[554 304] wear the same ornaments. A group of bracelets worn on the wrists, in fact, distinguish the napagba and the sogoné from free women.

It is their duty to serve the naba. They form a half circle around the naba when he appears; they accompany him on his short outings; and they carry the scepter and all of the insignia of chiefdom. They serve drinks to the naba, fan him when he takes a nap
[293] with fans called fika, make his bed, and do various errands. Likewise a naba never sends anyone but a sogoné to take a message to his wives.

*[i.e. royal wives — Analyst]

644 The sogoné may not wear trousers. He wears a type of
357 drawers called benda. All the nanamsé (plural of naba) have
292 followed the example of Naba Warga, and nowadays the most insignificant kombéré has at least a dozen sogoné.

[161]

The Napogré. General Conditions. Number of Wives of the Emperor Today. Ornaments.

644 Depending on whether the napagha is destined for the chief
595 himself or for one of his brothers or sons, the instruction of the napogré are given either in the quarters of the pugtiéma (first wife of the naba) or at the home of one of the old nabissi.

644 Water is heated and in it is put a bit of karite butter and other
595 ingredients. After the girl's head, armpits, and public hair have
302 been shaved by some old women, the pugtiéma or the old man dips a hand into the water, utters certain cabalistic words, and gives the names of all the chiefs who have succeeded each other up to the father of the current ruler.

644 The water is then given to the old women who bathe the
595 young napagha. It is at this time that she is instructed in the duties and obligations of the napogré, what she may do and what she should avoid.

[301] The new wife is then adorned with bracelets, kouaba (plural of kobré), and with rouamba [ankle rings], or with only bracelets. The chief may marry her at once or, depending on the circumstances, send her to the man for whom she is destined.

[684] The napagha must never have relations with any man other than her husband as long as she lives. Formerly she was pitilessly killed if she broke this rule. [162]

[302 As we have just seen, the napagha has no hair, and this is
301] the primary distinctive mark. Also, she wears bracelets on her wrists, sometimes even on her arms and some on her ankles (this is done mostly by favorites). Finally some wear kouaba, ornaments most often worn by old women.

The number of wives or napagha varies according to the importance of the naba and especially according to the desires of naba. According to the 1926 census, the present Mogho Naba had thirty-seven wives.

644 595 562 587 It should be said that the napagha, who is regarded as a piece of property, is part of the estate of a deceased chief. The new naba takes some of the old and young wives, and the rest are kept in the family of the nabissi. It is therefore not unusual to find women in the household of a naba who have been married to two or even three deceased chiefs. If they are not too old, they may give birth to children of the chief who is their second or third husband.

644 595 The establishment of a naba is often divided into three sections.

1. The zagkas sanga (the great house). All the old women, the unwanted ones, live here. Their mistress and guardian is the pugtiéma, who has charge of the house where the kimsé or manes of the ancestors live.

2. Zagbilin. The middle-aged women [163] who are still occasionally visited by their husband live here.

3. Dogoundba. This is the assemblage of several young and beautiful wives grouped around the favorite. They are called dogoundba, "guardians of the hut of the naba." These women receive all the favors, wear the finest ornaments, and are dressed in [291] godé (1). Most of the time the dogoundba live in one or several

1. A skirt that is highly valued among the Mossi.

huts, depending on their number.

Each of the women in the other two sections has her own hut.

Since the naba has too many wives to be able to look after all of them, they must provide their own clothing and food. Hence, they are forced to cultivate plots and sell some of their produce. Each napagha has her own small field of millet, peanuts, beans, and peas.

The dogoundba have a collective plot. They help their husband who not only has to feed them, but is also required to support [357] the sogoné and the samand'kamba (the latter are "people of the outer courtyard," another category of servitors who are sent on errands to the villages or who serve as grooms).

In the homes of the kombemba (plural of kombéré), it is the duty of the dogoundba to prepare food for the sogoné and for any

644
595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
644 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).
595
He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

562 431 643 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 643 644 858 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba, etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

643 644 858 If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the slightest objection.

357 This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 858 562 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes [431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most attractive for his fiancées, and the [584] [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

562 593 644 Rights of parents over their daughters. Although, as has already been noted, the parents retain the right to help their daughters in small ways, they may not, under any circumstances or pretext, break off their engagement nor prevent their marriage. Still less can they promise the daughter to a third party or expect any sort of gifts from the naba.

Later on, in the event that there is agreement between the parties, the husbands may give trifling presents to their in-laws, but there is neither obligation nor coercion to do so.

562 858 Exceptions. Girls given to the marabouts by the naba are considered a kind of alms (saraka), and any children born of such unions belong to the true fathers and may not be disposed of by the chief.

644 357 858 Disposition of boys. Boys recruited as sogoné or samand'kamba are required to serve the naba faithfully, but they continue to belong to their real relatives from whom they annually receive cowries and particularly the fougoibga (blanket).

644 357 661 Although the sogoné are regularly fed and clothed by the naba -- because [168] a naba must always be surrounded by many pages -- this is not done for the samand'kamba. In many cantons and especially in Ouagadougou at the emperor's court, they receive only a meager pittance every two, three, four, or seven days since their role as "vagabond" or groom is supposed to provide them with ample opportunities to rob or rather to pillage the natives. During the winter the grooms and other samand'kamba go out into fields of maize and millet at night or in the morning, and there is general looting. As for any fowl lingering in the karaga (fields of millet near the huts), they are killed and hidden in the bundles of hay used to feed the horses. There are exceptions to this rule: some ministers of the emperor and canton chiefs give their samand'kamba at least one meal per day -- at night -- and during the winter, because they are doing field work, they are given cooked beans or sagbo (millet cakes) at noon.

644 357 608 In general way, however, it may be said that this type of servitor is not supported by the naba. Like the sogoné, the samand'biga chooses a mother at the court of the naba. He helps her cultivate her plot and performs other small services for her (weaving her clothes,

644 357 608 for example), and in return the adoptive mother gives him a bit of food, over and above his regular ration.

644 357 [169] In view of these circumstances, those who are not required at the home of the naba to care for the horses or for some special service spend half the year with their relatives.

644 357 565 It is perhaps of interest to point out that the samand'kamba are mostly sons of the chiefs of villages of nabissi (sons of naba), sons of nakomsé (descendants of naba and nabissi), and sometimes even sons of canton chiefs at the court of the Mogho Naba. There is also the child of the ordinary Moaga, who was not made a sogoné because he was not thought worthy of the position. The rigorous discipline required of the former young men teaches them "to suffer in order to be able to command."

644 357 Anticipation of freedom. If the sogoné or samand'biga is the eldest son and is old enough to marry at the time of his father's death, the naba is required to free him, even though the period of obligatory service has not been completed.

643 844 584 Another custom, the zan-boko. There is another curious custom among the Mossi. If during the course of his journeys the naba stops in a village and during his stay a girl is born to a local Mossi woman, the child is his, with full rights, if he has been told of the birth.

However, the naba often knows nothing about the event, and the father takes care not to speak of it and then makes whatever disposition of the child he wishes.

844 584 [170] This custom, however, is practiced to its fullest extent between Mossi. A Moaga sana (stranger) passing through the village is invited by the elders to dig the zan-boko (hole in which the placenta must be buried). This is his zounogo, "opportunity." He gives a few cowries (100 to 200) to the head of the family and becomes the fiancé of the baby girl. Later on, when she reaches puberty, the man will make the customary gifts to the parents, and nothing will stand in the way of the marriage.